

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 02406 141012Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----086693 141558Z /46

R 140919Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8989  
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 2406

EXDIS

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MASS, MO, MR, AG, US  
SUBJECT: U.S. ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO: LET'S STALL BEFORE WE LEAP  
  
REF: A) NOUAKCHOTT 2239, B) RABAT 4846, C) PARIS 24186,  
D) STATE 195571

1. WITH CURRENT U.S. MOROCCAN ARMS POLICY AND ACTIONS  
ON DEAD CENTER BECAUSE OF EVENTS (MAURITANIAN COUP AND  
UNFULFILLED PRECONDITIONS MENTIONED PARA 2, REF B),  
EMBASSY BELIEVES IT IS GOOD IDEA TO TURN PRESENT SITUATION  
INTO CONSIDERED POLICY, I.E., STALL ON REVISED MOROCCAN  
ARMS DEAL.

2. WE KNOW FRANCE IS ACTIVELY SEEKING SAHARAN SOLUTION  
(REF C). WE HAVE ENCOURAGED SPAIN TO AID THE PARTIES  
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INVOLVED IN SETTling THE DISPUTE (REF D). TO PRESS AHEAD  
NOW WITH ARMS DEAL AND/OR INFORMING CONGRESS AND GOA  
OF IT IS, AS AMBASSADOR DRYZA SAID IN PARA 2, REF A,  
LIKELY TO RAISE GOA AND MAURITANIAN SUSPICIONS THAT WE  
ENCOURAGE AN AGGRESSIVE MOROCCAN POSTURE. IT COULD ALSO  
MUDDY POLITICAL WATER ENOUGH TO DISRUPT ANY CURRENT  
SAHARAN NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION, IT COULD STIFFEN

MOROCCAN RESISTANCE TO PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF SAHARAN PROBLEM AT A TIME WHEN MAURITANIANS, POLISARIO AND ALGERIANS APPEAR WILLING AT LEAST TO DISCUSS COMPROMISE.

3. A WELL-CONSIDERED "DO-NOTHING" POLICY (BOTH IN MILITARY SALES AND INFORMING ALGERIA) SEEMS TO BE THE BEST POLICY. IT WOULD GIVE OTHER PLAYERS (FRANCE, SPAIN AND POSSIBLY WEST GERMANY AND IVORY COAST, AS WELL AS COMBATTANTS) CHANCE TO CREATE ACCEPTABLE WESTERN SAHARA SOLUTION OUT OF PRESENT RAPIDLY EVOLVING SITUATION. AT VERY LEAST, U.S. WOULD NOT OPEN ITSELF TO CHARGE THAT ITS ACTIONS WERE HINDERING PROBLEM'S RESOLUTION. SUCH A "STALL" WOULD ALLOW U.S. TO MAINTAIN BOTH OPTION OF DEEPER FUTURE INVOLVEMENT AND CURRENT NEWTRALITY. GIVEN CURRENT CONDITIONS, EMBASSY BELIEVES U.S. SHOULD BE IN POSITION TO SEIZE AND SUPPORT ANY POSITIVE INITIATIVE TO BRING PEACE TO THE WESTERN SAHARA. INFORMING OTHERS OF AN ADDITIONAL MILITARY ROLE WITH MOROCCO NOW, WHEN IT IS NOT ACTUALLY IN TRAIN, COULD SEVERELY TARNISH U.S. NEUTRAL IMAGE IN SAHARAN ISSUE AND LIMIT POSITIVE, HELPFUL ROLE WHICH WE MAY BE ABLE TO PLAY AS SITUATION EVOLVES.

4. AT SAME TIME, EMBASSY WONDERS WHERE U.S. IS TODAY. DUE TO UNFULFILLED U.S. PRECONDITIONS, BALL IS IN MOROCCAN COURT. HAS ANY TIME LIMIT BEEN SET FOR MOROCCO TO MEET OUR PRECONDITIONS? WHAT WILL BE U.S. POLICY IF OUR  
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PRECONDITIONS ARE NOT MET?

5. AT PRESENT, USG HAS HAD NO FORMAL OR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH GOA ON WESTERN SAHARA SINCE THE MAURITANIAN COUP. THEY HAVE SOUGHT NONE AND U.S. HAS MAINTAINED "HANDS OFF" POLICY. NEVERTHELESS, THE ALGERIANS REMAIN CONCERNED ABOUT U.S. ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO. IN EVENT THAT SUCH SALES GO FORWARD AND CONGRESS IS SO INFORMED (OR EVEN INFORMED ABOUT THE SAUNDERS DISCUSSIONS IN MOROCCO), EMBASSY SUPPORTS TALKING POINTS SUGGESTED PARA 1, REF A WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COBRA HELICOPTER. REF B RIGHTLY NOTES THAT SUCH SALES ARE STILL DISTANT. WHILE WE BELIEVE GOA SHOULD BE INFORMED WHEN SUCH SALES ARE MADE, WAITING A WHILE WOULD SEEM MOST PRUDENT U.S. ACTION NOW.

6. IN SUM, LET U.S. SIT CAREFULLY ON SIDELINES WHILE OTHERS CARRY BALL. WE MAY ENTER GAME LATER WITH GOOD OFFICES OR ARMS SUPPORT, BUT AS FOR NOW, LET'S GIVE THE PRINCIPAL PLAYERS TIME TO WORK THINGS OUT AMONG THEMSELVES. HAYNES

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## Message Attributes

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